SYMPHONY OF SYMPHONIES

Symphony of Symphonies, Kierra © 2018

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Symphony of Symphonies

a chapbook by Kierra

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Love, Worship, I Am.

Growing up, despite my composition, I was always extremely inspired by religion in all forms and how it could possibly impact my life. I was raised as a Jehovah's Witness. For years, the Bible was my main form of knowledge, absorbing the text day in and day out while tossing around my own interpretations with my grandfather. For a while it was easy to understand. There's a certain simplicity that children have that allows them to digest complexities easily. This quality is something that I sometimes miss but ultimately do not regret losing.

As I grew older, there was a book in the Bible that caught my attention. It wasn't difficult for it to stick out, but when I first read this book it felt full of vibrancy and experiences that I had yet to comprehend. The Song of Songs, or the Song of Solomon, was a sort of adventure I had never been taken on within the bindings of the Bible. It did not celebrate God, it did not speak of laws. It celebrated love in its most primal form. This exploration of sex and romance was almost otherworldly.

For a while, this struck me as a contradiction. However, recently I started to wonder if sex was ungodly. Being a Jehovah's Witness, I was taught that God is the embodiment of love. He is not a God of anger, not a God of sorrow, but of love. Even as a non-believer this idea stuck with me. Knowing God as love changed my perspective of it. How could it be sacrilegious to love in all forms then?

Regardless, this concept of religion escaped me in all forms of my life except for my writing. My identity as a transgender woman completely changed how I viewed God, the universe, anything that could exist but did not, and everything that does exist but will not.

Ultimately, I lost personal interest and refused to apply it to myself. I want to live as myself. In essence, a part of me wanted to worship myself in ways no other person could. The alienation of my identity made me want to be otherworldly entirely.

How does that translate into regular relationships? Still this idea of love permeated my every thought. For a moment I concluded that I was Venusian in nature. Though this is true, I realized that I had come full circle. This idea that God was love and God demands worship. Therefore, the Song of Songs was born. In this hidden want of being worshipped and appreciated for being myself I realized that I, too, am an embodiment of love. I was born from a moment of love. Therefore, the Symphonies of Symphonies was born.

This project is something filled with hubris. I will travel through the moments I've experienced with those who have loved me or those who have worshipped me. I record the ways in which I've been appreciated, the ways I've been disrespected, the ways I've been loved, and the ways I've been worshipped. I want to introduce the reader to my lovers, the people who hate me, those I've taught myself to hate but promised I could never, and those that I've only known in brief moments. There are complexities to romance and sex that I feel I've barely scratched the surface of. Hopefully, I am able to do these experiences justice. Thank you so much for reading.

Kierra

nothing

if a father is a woman's first love
then i have only loved in trinities.
i do not know you past the nose bleeds,
the pain that claws you in the throat
to remember that i am no hallucination,
the way you tremble at my feet in present
tense and beg for god as if i am his prophet.
i never claimed to be your retribution on earth
but i want to be the leviathan of your seas
and swallow you whole until you
are choked by seaweed.
because of you i have only loved in trinities,
maybe twos, definitely threes.
i could never know that first love.

saints

i've waded enough in my mother's
perfume, the twinge of sweet pea
and daffodil. i think i've fermented
my blood in iron and clove long enough,
waiting for you to dig your nails
into my palms and let me consume
adrenaline as payment for your sins.
the act of mingling is my veneration,
the way you vibrate and melt next
to me synonymous with Peter's shaking
foot aching the ripples of the ocean
to keep him afloat. grab my hand
and believe my word, unzip me,
carry me to salvation. tell me what
i am, what i can be, for you are
the only one who is dignified enough
to pour seven bowls of water over
the beaming heart of my sun.

sink

i am the skin of an apricot, waiting
for you to sink your teeth in, flow
in to you, rivers, aromas, the curdling
of pine and lust. do you hear that?
each time your teeth scrape against
me is the sight of my voice, the way
it curls into you, circles your head
and heeds to your ascension.
were you aware of the way my hands
bend to beckon you forward? the same
way a siren would call out to Odysseus,
the way i've become your goddess
of fertility and beg the soil to reproduce?
my hero, please land on me, sink into me,
sink in. drown in me the way you let
your teeth drown in the juice of what
has already ripened. how does it taste?

invisible woman

you feared for three equinox turnings
that i was just a reflection of you
to the point where i became invisible,
a reverberation of your own heartbeat,
the pool of water that bounces into
your eyes, Narcissus. i could splatter
my unclean blood on the pavement
and become unholy and you would
still worry for yourself, the bites
of time you nestled into me now wasted,
the versions of yourself you marred
onto me now sullied by me unequivocally.
you would marry yourself if you could,
always lost in your own grey eyes.
can you see me? would you rather saw
me open? i slipped through with the same
effervescence as time. notice me.
please, notice me and save me from
drowning in those echoing grey eyes.

what she brings to the table

reverberation of peach echoed light,
plum sensibility of the black cosmos,
the riddled tickle that bounces in the throat.
the same listlessness as children,
the way our hands could interlock.
the same way lightning heats up
and rises from the soil and descends
from heaven all at once. you could describe
it the same way, can't you? the first time feeling
the resonance off one another, the same delight
of Jesus and John touching spirits
in womb, the matrimony of two distant
stars that reconnect in a constellation.
isn't that the way i make you feel? elation
through the congregation of body and cross,
the Mary at your feet, the Yeshuah in my lap,
the same way blueberries bleed when plucked
at the ripened moment. loss and gain all at once.
a resurrection of what cries inside. and i can make
you feel much more.

who i am to him

nudity and clove, cinnamon and thrush,
the dance of seven veils, your head
on the silver moon platter of my womb,
the delight that fills my body when
you are near but wilting. you do not
know how you have cracked me,
unaware that nakedness was my Jericho
yet i let you in, had you tie blood veins
around my ring finger and call me holy.
what do you truly believe? i dance with
the whores, sell my blood pressed wine
to men who disregard me, keep the souls
of men as i walk along... to you i am
Babylon, drunk with the kingdoms
of the earth, feet fit for faulting the ground
i walk because of my own instability.
is this what you believe? and through
all this, i am to believe you bear the name
of archangels? no. nakedness and stigmata,
cayenne and thimble, the howling of seven
trumpets, seven bowls of salt marsh pour
over your sun, the dread that fills my body
when you are near but still want me.
despite all this, you still want me.

what i did do

opal crushed and twice removed,
allspice and ginger root, filling mason jars
on my kitchen counter to the brim with
lavender honey and cane sugar.
i cross your name over my heart
seven times and tune in to the symphony
you learned to play for me before
the sun rises. you say i move
through life magically, a mist stepping
through reality fertilizing the ground
that gives way to my bare feet.
this is how i'd like to be worshipped,
raptured by words, drowned in the
mint julep stench of conversation.
enticement is the art of women like me,
honey ice tea and drawls, psalms in palm
and love on the brain.

would you rule me

i spend 40 days and 40 nights
counting zinnia petals i've stacked
higher than Jacob's Ladder, babbled
on about how heaven rhythms the same
names of our earthly kingdoms:
Byzantium of your eyes, Atlantis tucked
in the nape of your neck, Jerusalem
and how it fires in the pit of your navel.
i learned to love you in syncopation
with those mirrored empires, called
you the ruler of my body, chain
of my soul, lover in liberty and justice amen
but 40 days and 40 nights
i've counted zinnia petals, wilting,
weeped both Tigris and Euphrates
until i could be worshipped in turn.
what is the taste of elevation? fig
and pomegranate, apple and clove,
Eden and Canaan. where are you,
where? three days, three nights,
still no sign of you, Yeshuah of my
untiding heart.

what it means to be tame

auroras could fall from the mouth
of a man who tames lions intaglio
of lava, how he'd ask me to braid
his hair to shape pangea. i fall
for the ones who are the quickest
to disappoint. i could always see it
in the veins of his arms but for once
i wanted to submit: grey eyes, as tall
as a volcano, senseless as death,
sensitive as the rippled and pulled
apart ocean. i wish i could tell stories
of how his life could rule my vertebrae,
stories of how i subsided my anger
for the boy who could tame lions
but could not tame me.

when you turn your back

the trepidation of the loss of virginity,
aggregation of the bit of ribcage
God steals me from. i stab myself
in the heart seven times, each
knife filled to the brim with your sins.
why do i swallow swords for you,
my love, when you are the one
who binds me to cobalt altars
and torture stakes, offering
my body as supple sacrifice
for the crimes you've etched
into my body? each day you'd
sunset onto the canopy of me.
i burst into horizon, split ions
with your thunders as they rip
my robes into seven pieces.
i dip my head beneath water
ten times just to be clean for you.
why do i drown for you, my love?

what i heard when i put a conch to my ear

you warned me first,
the song of seas you traveled before
all coalesce in the middle,
Charybdis, Scylla that stirs
the sea sick. i should've known,
i could have listened. they teach
you to fear sirens, warn you
of the women that perch on
rocks that fell the bodies of great
ships they've marred with the visage
of our bodies. they never told me
to fear the sailors, the pirates
who could control my body
but you did. you warned me first,
Tethys, mother of churning waters,
goddess of my unending who wafts
me back together. i should have listened.

janus

cinnamon, grove, azure, effervescence,
tetrachromatic crown filled with ammonia
and tears. i always envied women
who could walk on water. let the skin
and sinew poke through tears.
my mother would never let me be a girl
like you, a woman who dared God
in past and present. Lilith, cobra wrapped
around your neck, a boa, the scent
of fig and pomegranate bisected, seeds
splayed in Gemini. i always envied women
like you, deep enough to see both
in front and behind without mirrors,
past and future that meld into the middle.
time, the enigma, crushed ruby glass,
chloroform, sepia seeps beneath the feet,
filtering stars through the collarbone.
you can see it all, how i have nothing
left to beg. you can see it all,
azure of my soul, cinnamon of my skin,
grove and groove of my neck. you pulled
me from the sepia of the moment. i float.
my Janus, my Janus, bookeeper of my seams.

in the lion's den

i've slept naked next to a lion
who thinks i cannot see the blood
of the women he's hunted before me
around his mouth. he earthquakes
out roars in the heat of the moment,
knows the taste of brimstone and acid
too well. there are moments when
i would cower out of love and love
him while he sunk his bones into
my body and split me indistinguishably
for others to enjoy. i've been the scraps
of a king and thought the bruises
hurt less coming from claws of gold
and fire. he was my everything, my sun.
i don't think he noticed i never closed
my eyes when he would sleep next to me.

i run to you

i swear to worship you through
the metestasization of the heart,
the blood wine pin pressed love
on the tongue, the reverberation
of skin and salivation. what have
you done to me? lover diverged
in these sun spun woods, i rush
through feet over mossy waters
as you satiate the appetite
of the eyes with the mountains
of my flesh. you sink into me skin
deep, the underbrush chase
of two gods, both made from dirt
and senselessness. my god,
i swear to worship you through
the calcification of my matter,
extension of my father's rib
and the milk of my mother's
womb. oh, my god, i swear
to wash your feet
with my follicles
and tears.

oh my god,
i swear
to be your Daphne
born of a
river and baked
alive
in the orange
peeled sun,
so elevated
and out of reach.

cling

i clung to love too fast
before i knew it could dilute me.
i passed my tongue and cauterized
thoughts for dreams God gives
little girls who hang red ropes
from their index finger in hopes
to be spared by the horns
and iron swords of men
who would dare storm their temples.
i waded too long in embryonic
rivers of luck and listlessness. i did not
know how to regard you. are you
an angel like the men before you,
power to seize me with one touch
and render me useless, or were
you the image of my father come
to make me walk along coals
so cold they could sink into
my soles. i clung to love too
fast before i knew you.
i am so sorry that i knew you.

for my lover

remember the nights we'd spend
sweating in Tennessee, the way
you'd force your body next to mine,
how i cradled you in my arms
and tried to nurse away your sins.
you told me i smelled like vanilla bean
and coconut water, hibiscus and Eden.
you always walked into my life in peppermint,
black and mild, the smell of regret
and tenderness hanging blue
on your tongue. remember how you'd
lie to me, those nights in Tennessee,
how we'd argue and learn to drive
mountains between us? but then we'd
reform, split ions that formed lightning
on your belly, thunder heat gasps for more
in my ear until i melted away. how could
i not love you when you reeked of blue
sin and mint, when our bodies broke
apart and reformed like puzzled Pangea.
how could i regret those nights in Tennessee.

unknown

all these years
and you are the only reason
that i have left to cry for.
where are you, where
have you gone.
i can still trace streaks
of lightning on your stomach
but i cannot find you.
i can remember the way
you held me, the softness
of soil and soul beneath
my feet. where are you.
i remember the day you made
my voice crack, glass menagerie,
octaves too high, reverberation
that looses itself in the pain of the moment
but where are you?
i pray for what i do not know.

what remains

diverge me: yellow wood, black bones,
the humble buzz of spring and the evasion
of sleep, thorny nightmares, what it feels
like to have your skin freeze at the thought
of you laying next to me. can he see where
my tongue's been cut before, how many times
i wish i'd never bit into him? sometimes
i wish i knew where to place myself together,
to know which bridges of my spine are less
traveled. please dissect me, release me,
prison of skin, the crush of marrow is browned
leaves beneath my feet, the stumbling
of Atlas's shoulders... understand me and rust,
please know me for a moment, step in the same
puddles like everyone before and use me
as a stone to evade the mud.

I AM THE SKIN OF AN APRICOT / WAITING FOR YOU TO SINK YOUR TEETH IN

WERE YOU AWARE OF THE WAY MY HANDS / BEND TO BECKON YOU FORWARD?